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PATENT APPLICATION FOR
DISPENSABLE RESEALABLE BAG FOR FOOD

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DISPENSABLE RESEALABLE BAG FOR FOOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is based on U.S. Provisional application 60/426,91 filed November 14, 2002, and hereby incorporated by reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to resealable plastic bags and, in particular, to a bag well suited for packaging of food in a deli or the like.

Plastic bags constructed of films of polyester, polypropylene or the like are well suited for storage of food items providing an inexpensive material that is both a hygienic and liquid tight. Particularly for the use in a delicatessen or grocery store, it is known to provide a stack of such bags held on a rack or the like by a tab attached to each bag by a perforated portion. The bag may be removed by breaking the perforation and food inserted into the bag which is then sealed with a separate sticker or the like. Such bags can be inconvenient requiring both a separate rack for the bags and a dispenser for the stickers and can be cumbersome for food handling personnel who may be wearing gloves.

The consumer purchasing the food may wish to store the food in the bag after consuming only a portion. Generally, however, the bag is not resealable, requiring the consumer to use a separate container or to have stickers or other sealing means. Bags that can be resealed after each use are known in the art and quite popular among consumers. One style of bag has a molded plastic zipper-style seal. Nevertheless, these bags are relatively expensive to manufacture and generally not practical in the food retail environment.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an inexpensive resealable bag, stackable for shipping, suitable for rack mounting for easy dispensing and inexpensive enough for food retail use. The resealing is provided by a tacky adhesive placed at two positions on the front surface of the bag as stored on the rack. Tearing a perforation holding the bag to the rack allows a flap portion of the bag to be folded to close the bag with the flap held by a resealable adhesive.

Specifically, the present invention provides a flexible package for food comprising a back plastic sheet having a front and rear surface, a top edge engageable with a rack, and a perforation separating the top edge from a remainder of the back plastic sheet. A front plastic sheet also having a front and rear surface is attached at side and bottom edges and not at a top edge to the corresponding edges of the back plastic sheet with the rear surface of the front plastic sheet adjacent to the front surface of the remainder of the back plastic sheet to form a pouch therewith. The front plastic sheet is sized so that the top edge of the front plastic sheet is below the perforations of the back plastic sheet so as to leave a flap portion of the remainder of the back plastic sheet that may fold over the top edge of the front plastic sheet to cover the top edge of the front plastic sheet and so that the front surface of the flap portion may fold about the front portion of the front plastic sheet at a contact area near the top edge of the front plastic sheet. At least one resealable adhesive strip is positioned in the contact area to resealably hold the flap portion closed against the front plastic sheet.

Thus it is one object of the invention to provide an inexpensive resealable plastic bag that can be dispensed from a rack or the like.

It is another object of the invention to provide resealable bags using adhesive that may be dispensed in stacked configuration without inadvertent sealing of bags to one another.

It is another object of the invention to provide a low cost bag that may be shipped in high volume yet easily dispensed.

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a bag that may be used by deli personnel with minimum wasted motion and without the need to maintain separate bags and stickers.

These particular objects and advantages may apply to only some embodiments falling within the claims and thus do not define the scope of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an individual bag constructed according to the present invention showing a perforated tab for holding a bag to a rack and showing a positioning of adhesive strips on the front of the bag and on a flap portion that may fold over the top edge of the bag;

Fig. 2 is a cross section generally along lines 2--2 of Fig. 1 showing the bag with the perforated section broken away and the front flap folded down and sealed to contain a food product therein using the adhesive strips;

Fig. 3 is a second embodiment of the invention showing a two bag system in which mirror symmetric bags are attached to a central tab section by means of perforations thereby increasing the storage density of the bags of the present invention; and

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the bags of Fig. 3 as held on a simple rack stabilizing the bags for use by a store worker where one hand is used to open the bag and the other may be used to insert the food therein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to Fig. 1, food storage bag 10 of the present invention includes a generally rectangular back sheet 12 having top edge 14, bottom edge 16 and left and right edges 18 and 20. The sheet may be constructed of a film of polyethylene or polypropylene or other suitable material.

A perforation 22 parallel to the top edge 14 and positioned below the top edge 14 defines an upper tab 24. The perforation allows the tab 24 to be separated from a remainder portion 26 of the back sheet 12 by a tearing action. The tab 24 includes two elongated holes 27 that allow the tab 24 to be engaged by hooks or pins on a holder as will be described.

Attached to a front surface of the remainder portion 26 is a front sheet 28 being of similar material to the back sheet 12 having corresponding left and right edges 18' and 20', bottom edge 16' and top edge 14'. Edges 18 and 18', 16 and 16', 20 and 20' are heat-sealed together so as to form a pouch openable by drawing top edge 14 (which is not sealed to the back sheet 12) away from the back sheet 12.

The size of the front sheet 28 in height is slightly less than the height of the remainder portion 26 so as to present a flap portion 30 of the back sheet 12 extending above the top edge 14'. Positioned on a front surface of this flap portion 30 above the top edge 14' is a strip of tacky adhesive 32. A similar strip of tacky adhesive 32' extends laterally across the front surface of the front sheet 28 just below the top edge 14'. Methods of preparing tacky adhesives suitable for use with the present invention are well known in the art such as described generally in U.S. Patents 3,406,039; 5,089,320; 5,382,472; 5,993,962 and their cited references, all hereby incorporated by reference.

The use of strips of tacky adhesive 32 and 32' allow tack between an adhesive strip and non-adhesive portions of the plastic films of the front and back sheets 28 and 12 to be minimized but, allow a greater amount of tack between adjacent food storage bags 10 in a stack or in the rack so as to maintain the food storage bags 10 in alignment. Nevertheless, in an alternative embodiment, a single adhesive tack strip may be used, positioned either in the place of tacky adhesive 32 or 32'.

Referring now to Fig. 2, the flap 30 may be folded over the top edge 14' so that strips of tacky adhesive 32 and 32' may be connected to seal top edge 14 against top edge 14' forming an enclosed volume 36 which may receive or have received a food 38 such as lunchmeat, cheese, or the like.

Referring now to Fig. 3, in an alternative embodiment, tab 24 may include both a first perforation 22 connecting it to a first remainder portion 26 of the back sheet and a second perforation 22' connecting tab 24 to a second remainder portion 26' extending in an opposite direction from the tab 24 so that two separate food storage bags 10 and 10' may share a common tab 24.

Referring now to Fig. 4, a counter rack 40 may include a stand portion 42 having a base 44 for resting against the counter or the like, and an upper surface 46 positioned above the base 44 by a distance greater than that between elongated holes 28 and bottom edges 16 and 16' of the co-joined food storage bags 10 and 10'. The upward extending pins 48 may be received by elongated holes 28 to retain the multiple bags in a stacked configuration on the counter rack 40. As retained the user may open the bag by pulling top edge 14' of one of the bags forward with one hand while the other hand is used to insert food 38 into the pouch formed by the front and back sheets. The hand used to open the pouch may then be used to steady the rack and the other hand used to remove the bag from the rack by separating the perforations 22. The food 38 may then be sealed within the food storage bag 10 as described with respect to Fig. 2.

In order to stabilize the stack of food storage bags, the tabs 24 may be fused together by melting a hole through the stacked tabs 24 or by other means. The tacky adhesive 32, 32' may be placed on only one of the flap 30 and front sheet 24 in an alternative embodiment and/or the tacky adhesive 32, 32' may be covered with a protective strip that is peeled away before use.

It is specifically intended that the present invention not be limited to the embodiments and illustrations contained herein, but include modified forms of those embodiments including portions of the embodiments and combinations of elements of different embodiments as come within the scope of the following claims.